

many of her colleagues, she did not think her students would know enough or be engaged enough to do a good job of co-constructing criteria. The teacher was amazed by the results:

It was the only thing I did differently. I was so surprised. The students were so thoughtful and respectful. Their criteria were really good. One class set the very same criteria I had set in previous years. Guess what? This year *every* student turned in their project.

What made the difference for students? Was it the respect they felt from their teacher, the choices they made, their feelings of ownership of the process, a greater understanding of the material? The answer might be different for every learner, but the important thing is they made the choice to do the work, and increased learning appears to be related to students' active engagement through choice (Langer, 1989, 1997; Schlechty, 2002). This is a clear research trend: When students are involved in assessment, more learning takes place (see Black & Wiliam, 1998; Crooks, 1988).

Giving and Receiving Feedback for Learning

William Grindell's tenth-grade students at Farrington High School in Honolulu, Hawaii, were studying the relationship between cultural traditions of particular religions in relation to the larger societies in which their members exist. Toward the end of the unit, the students were asked to create a brochure. Together they fine-tuned the rubric for the brochure, and then students got started. When the brochure was almost complete, he explained to the students that their work could be even better if they got feedback from themselves and from others. Mr. Grindell gave everyone a photocopy of a sample brochure. They analyzed it using the criteria they developed earlier. He gave a list of examples of feedback and asked the students to determine which examples were of good quality. They talked about how they would feel if they were given that kind of feedback and what kind of feedback would help them do better. Once they discussed the different kinds of feedback and

came to an agreement about what good quality feedback looked (and sounded) like, he explained that when they gave each other feedback, it had to be specific and descriptive so others would know what to do better next time. Working in teams, they exchanged brochures, highlighted the sections on the rubric that applied, and gave each other specific, descriptive feedback in relation to the criteria.

Specific feedback is important for learning. Think about how digital cameras provide us with instant feedback we can use to choose our next steps: We take a picture, review it, analyze it, maybe ask for someone else's opinion, and then decide our next step—do we take another picture, and how will it be different than the first? Each time students reflect on their learning using co-constructed criteria, they practice articulating what they have learned. When they practice articulating important ideas, they become better able to give themselves and others specific, descriptive feedback that will feed-forward the learning.

The quality of feedback increases dramatically when informed by clear criteria and samples of excellent work. Specific, descriptive feedback, particularly when given in relation to co-constructed criteria, provides students with the opportunity to improve. To increase the amount of specific, descriptive feedback for students, teachers should seek sources of feedback for students beyond themselves. Consider these examples:

- Students analyze what worked and what did not as they review each other's writing assignments (Davies, 2006).
- Students invite their parents to view their portfolios online and provide feedback (Sueoka, 2007).
- Young children listen to each other read and note on a list of criteria what they do and what they need to do (Davies, 2000).

These simple practices are ways to multiply the feedback effect. Consider the teacher who tries to give students a lot of timely